

12 STEPS to Prevent Relapse

Getting clear and sober is a great start, and then we need a plan to STAY clear and sober.

I call this plan my "12 STEPS" because the 12-step programs of AA and NA saved my life. I relapsed every year for 8 years while attending meetings, but that wasn't the fault of the program!

There are 12 things/steps I practice regularly to maintain my freedom from addictions, and I'm confident these "12 STEPS" can help you, too:

1. Know yourself ~ and learn how to respond, instead of react.
2. Keep yourself accountable.
3. Use your 'honesty and values" compass to guide your life.
4. Manage your behaviours with integrity & discipline.
5. Stop allowing others to affect your reality.
6. Stop taking things personally.
7. Learn to define and manage your feelings and emotions.
8. Appreciate "what is," and learn to live in the present.
9. Comfort yourself when you are hurt or disappointed.
10. Pressure yourself to change, instead of others.
11. Embrace challenges as growth opportunities.
12. The "problem" is rarely the problem; a well-defined problem is easily solved.

What we practice grows stronger. As long as you are willing to gradually cultivate these STEPS into new habits, you will take a big STEP in your emotional development. Addiction is a symptom. When you remove the harmful substance or behaviour, it needs to be replaced with something less harmful. Developing new, healthy habits takes time and repetition. Have a persistent willingness to exert consistent efforts to help yourself. You will build your resilience and your new habits will help prevent relapse.



This STOPP tool is one I use daily to remind me to "practice the pause" when I'm dealing with heightened emotions. Using this tool helps me show up as a better person, get better results, and not later regret something I did or said.


STOPP

TAKE A BREATH

OBSERVE: What am I thinking?
What am I reacting to?
What am I feeling in my body?

PULL BACK: Put in some perspective. See the bigger picture. Is this fact or opinion? How would someone else see this?

PRACTISE WHAT WORKS: What's the best thing to do for me, for others, for this situation?



The K.E.Y. to maintaining your freedom from addictions is to **Keep Educating Yourself**.
There are hundreds of tools you can use in recovery (and life, in general).
The **KEY** is to keep looking for something that works for **YOU**.

OTHER HELPFUL RESOURCES:

LOUISE HAY mirror exercise:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VZFcN5qB8yM>

SHORT meditations:

<https://kelymentalhealth.ca/collection/guided-mindfulness-meditations-dr-vo>

MBSR (Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction) Course, created by Jon Kabat Zinn

<https://palousemindfulness.com>

Addiction & Dopamine - Dr.Cyrus McCandless: 11 mins

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aqXmOb_fuN4



Andrew Huberman Professor of Neurobiology at Stanford ~ What Alcohol Does to Your Body, Brain, & Health 2:01 mins

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DkS1pkKpILY>

David Nutt, The Truth About Drugs 1:03 mins

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_bBii6AVxb0

Dr. Bob Weathers Recovery Without Shame or Stigma: 90mins

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gJE-jPl0Pj0>

Finding Joe:85 mins

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s8nFACrLxr0>

Sukie Baxter on Anxiety & Vagus Nerve exercises: 14 mins (5:30 mark for exercises)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1HCG3BGK8I>

Character Strengths on VIA:

<https://redroofrecovery.pro.viasurvey.org>

May the force be with you, and remember -

YOU are the force!

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